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NOTE VERBALE DATED 19 MAY 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Please find annexed hereto a memorandum from the French Government on the establishment of safe areas in Bosnia Herzegovina.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jean-Bernard MERIMEE

Annex

FRENCH MEMORANDUM RELATIVE TO SAFE AREAS

A. Principles

1. A safe area is defined as a besieged area, with a precisely defined perimeter, placed under the protection of the United Nations, in which the delivery of humanitarian assistance is ensured and all acts of aggression banned.

2. Resolution 824 (1993) of 6 May 1993 declares that "Sarajevo, and other such threatened areas, in particular the towns of Tuzla, Zepa, Gorazde, Bihac, Srebrenica and their surroundings, should be treated as safe areas by all the parties concerned and should be free from armed attacks and from any other hostile act". It is cautious concerning the way to ensure protection of those areas, and leaves to a further resolution for what concerns the authorization of the use of military force.

3. The general aim of the scheme should be to stop territorial gains by the Serbian forces in Bosnia Herzegovina and to achieve a negotiated settlement by the parties concerned.

4. The mandate of UNPROFOR should be modified in order to give it expressly, more clearly than in resolution 824 (1993), the task of ensuring the security of safe areas. To this end a new resolution should provide explicitly for the possibility of recourse to the force, by all necessary means.

B. UNPROFOR's tasks

5. The new tasks of UNPROFOR in the safe areas might be the following. They obviously depend on the scale of the forces deployed, which makes it necessary to consider several options as described in paragraph 7:

(a) In a light option without formed units:

- to deter aggression
- to observe the cease-fire
- to facilitate relief operations to the populations.

(b) In a light option with formed units:

- to deter aggression
- to monitor the cease-fire
- to occupy some key points on the ground
- to participate in relief operations to the population.

(c) In a heavy option:

- to oppose any aggression
- to monitor the cease-fire
- to occupy key points on the ground
- to participate in relief operations to the population
- to keep open one or more logistic corridors through Serb areas
- if necessary to collect heavy weapons and to carry out demilitarization.

6. The criteria for triggering the use of force, determined in a limited way, might be in particular:

(a) Shelling of safe areas by the forces of one of the factions,

(b) Armed incursion into safe areas,

(c) Impediment of free movement of UNPROFOR and protected humanitarian convoys under protection.

C. Modalities of action proposed

7. Three options can be considered in order to ensure protection of threatened populations, who are estimated to number 500,000 inhabitants and refugees in Sarajevo, 200,000 in Tuzla, 10,000 in Zepa, 80,000 in Gorazde, 310,000 in Bihac, 30,000 in Srebrenica and 15,000 in Foca.

(a) Two light options: either, in the absence of formed units, establishing a symbolic United Nations presence, or providing for the monitoring of a limited perimeter with relatively weak forces:

- establishing a United Nations presence requires the deployment of observer teams in all the areas (several dozen);
- monitoring limited perimeters requires the commitment of a brigade in Sarajevo (5,000 men) and of a battalion (900 men) in each of the four other areas (treating Gorazde and Foca as one area and Srebrenica and Zepa as another).

As a first step, in Eastern Bosnia, the deployment might be limited to one company for each enclave.

(b) A heavy option with a large perimeter, ensuring free movement of the United Nations forces and preventing any enemy aggression, particularly artillery. The scale of forces needed to cover all the tasks mentioned in paragraph 5 (c) amounts to one division (15,000 to 20,000 men) for Sarajevo and one brigade (5,000 men) for each of the other four areas.

1 (c) In any case, it would be advisable to plan for one intervention unit consisting of a light brigade (3,000 men), and the use of air power (already partly deployed in the enforcement of the no-fly zone), in order to be able to confront potential major aggression.

D. Participation, political control and command

8. It seems to us that the effective participation on the ground of the United States and the Russian Federation with the countries already involved would confer added credibility to such a concept of safe areas and might make the light options sufficient. The establishment of those areas should be accompanied by the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of a political authority able to control actions undertaken, and by the establishment of a command organization capable of ensuring in particular coordination between ground and air forces. These two provisions, which appear intrinsically necessary, would moreover be in line with preparations for the transition towards the eventual implementation of the Vance-Owen peace plan.